

**CONGRESSMAN SHERWOOD BOEHLERT (R-NY)**  
**TESTIMONY TO SSCJ APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE**  
**April 6, 2006**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today. The Science Committee enjoys an outstanding working relationship with this Subcommittee at both the Member and the staff levels on both sides of the aisle, and we do not take that relationship for granted. So thank you for your openness and for the leadership you have shown on science issues.

Because our two Committees are in such regular contact, I usually don't bother to testify before you, given the demands on your time. But I wanted to testify this year because of the surpassing importance of the President's American Competitiveness Initiative, which Chairman Wolf, Dr. Ehlers and I have been advocating for a long time.

You have a unique opportunity this year to set the nation on a path that will keep us competitive and prosperous in the decades ahead. As the National Academies outlined so potently in its report *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, for the United States to remain competitive, we must increase our investment in research and education. To put it more colloquially, we can pay now, or we will pay later.

I won't go on at length about this because I know we all agree on the importance of investing in science. But that agreement won't mean much unless it's backed up with the dollars that only you can provide. So I urge you to fully fund the President's request for research at the National Science Foundation (NSF) and for the laboratory and construction accounts at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

We have to get these agencies, which have lost ground in recent years, on the path to doubling in at least 10 years. Anything less than full funding this year will make that doubling highly unlikely, both politically and fiscally. So, please, let's make the investments now we need to protect our nation's future. We will do anything we can to help you keep that funding through the entire appropriations process.

While the American Competitiveness Initiative is my top priority, I do, of course have other concerns as Science Chairman. I urge you also to fully fund the President's requests for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), which are really the bare minimum needed for these agencies to carry out their important duties.

If you can find any additional funds, I would add money to the President's request in the following priority order.

First priority is the Education and Human Resources Directorate at NSF. NSF plays a vital role in science and math education at all levels, but the FY07 proposal is less than the Directorate received in FY04.

A close second is funding for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program (MEP) at NIST. As you know, this program, reauthorized by the House last year, provides vital assistance to small manufacturers. It helps keeps U.S. manufacturers competitive. Yet the proposed budget cuts funding by more than half without any explanation of how the MEP centers would be able to survive with such a cut.

A close third as a priority is the Science Mission Directorate at NASA. The FY07 budget provides sharply reduced funding for science compared to earlier projections. This will sideline important scientific work that not only would increase human knowledge, but that would require the development of technology that could promote U.S. security and competitiveness. Following the recommendations of the scientific community, we urge you, at a minimum, to restore funding for the Research and Analysis programs in the Directorate and to permit additional smaller missions to be launched. Those items are more of a priority than any flagship science mission.

A fourth priority is the Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate at NASA. I share your support for NASA's aeronautics programs. While NASA is revamping its aeronautics programs a major increase in funding may not be necessary. But the U.S. must maintain its leadership in aerospace and the projected cuts over the next five years are too severe.

My fifth priority is the Advanced Technology Program (ATP) at NIST. At a time when the Augustine Report is calling for additional research programs to spur U.S. industrial competitiveness, we should not be dismantling a proven program that serves that goal.

Finally, let me make clear that I do not think it is a priority to add funding above the request to the Crew Exploration Vehicle (CEV) program at NASA. I support the President's Vision for Space Exploration, but I do not see any great advantage to be gained from launching the CEV in 2012 rather than 2014. Too many other items are of greater concern.

No one has described any actual threat posed by the additional two-year gap – even taking into account Chinese space efforts – and the U.S. should be able to maintain an adequate aerospace workforce as long as it is clear that work on the CEV is proceeding according to schedule. Our priorities should not be skewed by emotional appeals.

Thank you for your consideration of these views, and the similar views being offered today by two of our subcommittee chairs, Dr. Ehlert and Mr. Inglis. I admire your leadership, and I look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that we take the necessary steps now to ensure a prosperous future for our nation.